

Crowd Dynamics



How Crowds Behave

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Crowd Behaviour

- Contagion theory
- Convergent theory
- Emergent Norm theory

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Types Of Crowds

- Casual Crowds
- Cohesive Crowds
- Expressive Crowds
- Aggressive Crowds

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Casual Crowds

- Group of people who merely happen to be present at a given place
- Are not organised or united
- Do not have a common purpose or following a particular leader

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Cohesive Crowds

- Group who are assembled for some specific purpose
- A common interest and some control
- No organised leadership
- Casual crowd can become a cohesive crowd following an occurrence, which inspires mutual interest

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Expressive Crowds

- Group held together by a common interest
- Has defined leadership and control
- Displays a generally unified mood

Aggressive Crowds

- Under positive leadership and displays strong emotions
- Engage in some kind of aggressive action.
- Usually assembled because of strong feelings about some issue
- Show a definite unity of purpose
- Actions may become highly emotional, impulsive or even destructive.

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Behaviour of Unruly Crowds



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Lack of restraint

- Crowd may be boisterous or unruly without becoming violent.
- Agitation or the arrival of some unpopular figure can transform a harmless crowd.
- When a crowd becomes a mob, restraint is lost and a potential riot situation develops

Abnormal behaviour

- Mob behaviour is essentially emotional and without reason.
- Dissimilarity to behaviour in private life.
- Mob behaviour may be a form of escapism or release of tension.
- Behaviour of individuals in the crowd is not like the behaviour of the same people acting individually

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Conformity with the group

- The conduct of people in crowds is highly contagious.
- Most people are susceptible to suggestion and will conform to the standard of conduct of a group.
- Attention of individuals is directed to objects and symbols that excite their emotions or impulses.
- Crowd behaviour is governed by passion and impulse rather than by reason or intellect

Shared emotions

- People tend to believe that the attitudes and emotions which they are experiencing are being shared by everyone present.
- When large numbers are present, there is a tendency to discourage behaviour that is different from that of the group.
- Crowd members stimulate each other and the individual gets the impression that everyone feels as he does

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Anonymity

- Crowd serves as a cover in which the individual can hide his identity and not be singled out
- Contributes significantly to unruly behaviour

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Inability to desist

- Individual may be present out of curiosity
- Unwittingly drawn into the activities
- Psychological pressures may be so great that he becomes actively involved with the crowd

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Recourse to violence

- When groups brought together by some strong social motivation, whether political, religious or economic, certain factors tend to influence the organisation of the group.
- When group is subjected to a common frustration, the cohesiveness of the group is increased.
- Common frustration draws people together psychologically

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Recourse to violence (cont)

- Combination of frustration, group solidarity and desire for action can create a situation where emotion overcomes reason.
- Risk of violence is highest when crowd is confronted by opponents of their cause or by police.
- Police symbolise constituted authority and can inspire hostility in the crowd by mere presence.



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Summary

- **CROWD BEHAVIOUR CAN CHANGE FROM PASSIVE TO AGGRESSIVE RAPIDLY**
- **ALWAYS BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDS**
- **DON'T BECOME COMPLACENT.**